

## **An Open Letter to Our Community**

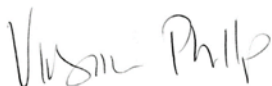
For the Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas to progress, it needs to change, as everyone recognizes. The current Board of Directors is not fighting to stay in office. We will resign. We want a successful transition of leadership which preserves experience and knowledge in the areas of finance, employee management, and communication.

In an effort to find a consensus, we are convening a meeting tomorrow with several groups of members who have expressed differing views. We plan to listen, discuss, and present options to our membership at our Town Hall later this week. Ultimately, the current Board wants what is best for the entire membership and our larger community, and is seeking the best way to accomplish that.

Together we will create a new election timeline as soon as possible, with all 15 Board positions up for a vote of the membership, and a new Chair and Vice Chair to be appointed by the new Board. As soon as the election results are returned, the current board will resign and the new board will take over. We graciously ask our broader community for patience as we undertake the election process.

We need to overhaul our organization's culture to create a safe environment for everyone, and that is what we are striving to do. But that can only happen when our organization and community are unified in creating positive change. Polarization and splintering are detrimental and extremely harmful for a successful transition to the creation of the renewed organization that we would all like to see.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia Philip".

Virginia Philip, MS  
Vice Chair of the Board  
Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas